

Title: Free to Breathe: Statewide Smokefree Workplaces to Protect Alaskans from Dangers of Secondhand Smoke.

WHEREAS, In the United States, tobacco kills more people per year than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders, suicides and fires combined¹; and

WHEREAS, 1200 people in the U.S. everyday die from tobacco related disease² and nearly 600 Alaskans die each year due to deaths attributable to tobacco use³; and

WHEREAS, Secondhand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or carcinogenic (cancer causing), including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic, ammonia, and hydrogen cyanide, and children who are exposed to secondhand smoke are inhaling many of the same cancer-causing substances and poisons as smokers⁴; and

WHEREAS, Secondhand tobacco smoke exposure is a leading cause of preventable death, and causes disease in healthy nonsmokers, including heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease, and cancer; and

WHEREAS, It has been determined by the U.S. Surgeon General that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, air ventilation systems do not work, and that only completely smokefree environments can protect health; and

WHEREAS, Smokefree workplace laws protect people from secondhand smoke, reduce tobacco use overall, support healthy lifestyles, model healthy behavior, and support quit attempts; and

WHEREAS, Smokefree workplaces will protect the health of children, grandchildren, families, community members, and discourage youth from starting to use tobacco;

WHEREAS, 29 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, plus hundreds of cities and counties have enacted strong smokefree laws that include restaurants and bars⁵; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 120 Alaskans die each year from lung cancer and heart disease caused by exposure to secondhand smoke⁶; and

WHEREAS, Eight out of ten Alaskan smokers believe that secondhand smoke is harmful and nearly as many agree that people should be protected from secondhand smoke⁷; and

WHEREAS, 43% of Alaska's youth were exposed to smoking in the past week⁸; and

WHEREAS, There is clear evidence that smokefree legislation does not hurt restaurant or bar businesses, and in some cases may improve it⁹; and

WHEREAS, Reducing tobacco use in Alaska can lead to a more positive view of the state and lead to decrease in substance use/abuse;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the ATCA Youth Leaders coalition that all of Alaska, be it rural or urban, support going smokefree in public areas such as restaurants, bars, businesses and workplaces.

ACTION STATEMENT:

This resolution is to be delivered to the Alaska Legislature in Juneau:

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Sources:

1. (AIDS) HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 1998; (Alcohol) McGinnis MJ, Foege WH. Review: Actual Causes of Death in the United States. JAMA 1993; 270:2207-12; (Motor Vehicle) National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, 1998; (Homicide, Suicide) NCHS, vital statistics, 1997; (Drug Induced) NCHS, vital statistics, 1996; (Smoking) SAMMEC, 1995.
2. CDC. Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost and Productivity Losses-United States, 2000-2004. MMWR 2008; 57(45): 1226-8. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5745a3.htm>
3. Tobacco in the Great Land: A Portrait of Alaska's Leading Cause of Death, 2012.
4. U.S. Surgeon General Statements on Children and Secondhand Smoke. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children are Hurt by Secondhand Smoke, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/factsheets/factsheet2.html>; The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, How to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones from Secondhand Smoke - <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/factsheets/factsheet3.html>
5. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what_we_do/state_local/smoke_free_laws/
6. Alaska Tobacco Facts, 2009 Update, page 4.
7. Alaska Tobacco Facts, 2009, page 2.
8. Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2007-2009.
9. Hahn, EJ, "Smokefree Legislation: A Review of Health and Economic Outcomes Research," American Journal of Preventive Medicine 39(6S1):S66-S76, 2010.

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